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RUEHRA/AMEMBASSY RIGA 1762  
RUEHVL/AMEMBASSY VILNIUS 3800  
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 3420  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1342  
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DEPT FOR DRL/IRF OLIVIA HILTON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [KIRF](#) [BO](#)  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR VISITS VANDALIZED HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

Classified By: Ambassador Karen Stewart for reasons 1.4 (d).

Summary

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¶1. (C) Ambassador visited Minsk's Yama Holocaust Memorial and two other related sites on November 15. The Yama site had been vandalized on November 11, when unknown persons drew a swastika on the memorial's main monument, splashed white paint on bronze statues, and left leaflets signed by the "Belaya Rus Aryan Resistance Front," calling for a war on supporters of Judaism and "those under the aegis of the United States." The police opened a criminal investigation into the desecration of the memorial, but the BKGB refused to investigate the Belaya Rus Aryan Resistance Front, since it does not view the leaflet as a security threat. Jewish leaders and political analysts, however, consider the vandalism to be a calculated attack and not simply a case of teenage hooliganism. End summary.

Holocaust Memorial Vandalized

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¶2. (U) On November 15, Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission visited the recently vandalized Minsk Yama Holocaust Memorial, which commemorates the 5,000 prisoners of the Minsk ghetto who were killed by Nazis on March 2, 1942. On November 11, vandals drew a white swastika on the main obelisk and splashed several bronze figures with white paint. The perpetrators also left leaflets signed by the "Belaya Rus Aryan Resistance Front" calling for a war against supporters of liberal democracy and Judaism and "others rushing to a new world order under the aegis of Talmudism and the USA."

¶3. (C) Joint Distribution Community representative Artur Livshits, who provided a guided tour of the Yama memorial and other Jewish memorials in Minsk, told Ambassador that the police were able to remove the swastika from the obelisk with a special paint remover. However, the paint remains on the bronze figures, as the police claimed there were not enough supplies to clean the statues.

Teenage Hooliganism or Anti-Semitic Attacks?

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¶4. (U) Independent press reported that Israeli Ambassador to Minsk Zeev Ben Arie called for a full investigation into the memorial desecration, especially given that the Israeli

Cultural and Information Center was also vandalized with swastikas and anti-Semitic graffiti over the same weekend. According to independent press, the Minsk police have launched a criminal investigation into the desecration of the Yama Memorial. However, independent press reported that the Belarusian Security Services (BKGB) refused to investigate the Belaya Rus Aryan resistance, claiming that the leaflet is not a security risk and the vandalism was a simple case of teenage hooliganism.

15. (C) Livshits believes that the memorial desecration is not just the work of teenage vandals, but was a calculated anti-Semitic attack. Political analyst Vladimir Podgul speculated that the GOB might have ordered the attack. As "proof", on November 16 he showed Poloff a 1997 recruitment flyer for a radical, nationalistic youth group that Lukashenko supported and financed. According to Podgul, a comparison between the language from the 1997 flyer and the language of the flyers left at the Yama Memorial demonstrates that the same group authored both documents.

Comment

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16. (C) While Podgul's conclusions may be far-fetched, these recent acts of vandalism indicate an increase of anti-Semitic acts in Belarus. (Note: For more information on anti-Semitism in Belarus, please refer to the International Religious Freedom Report. End note.) In the past, leaders of the Jewish community reported that individual acts of anti-Semitism occurred within Belarus, but denied that anti-Semitism was promoted by the state. However, a continued increase in the number of anti-Semitic acts may cause the Jewish community to rethink its assessment.  
Stewart